

WorkFirst Lean

Final Reflection

www.workfirst.wa.gov/wflean/default.htm

OCTOBER
2014

Greetings from Community Services Division Director Babs Roberts, Project Sponsor



It's hard to believe that the journey we began over a year ago—to bring people together from across the WorkFirst (WF) spectrum to evaluate our current state, and identify enhancements in critical areas of service delivery within the program—is almost complete!

First, let me take a moment to thank the 100+ teammates in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Employment Security Department (ESD), Department of Commerce, the State Board of Community and Technical

Colleges (SBCTC) and the Department of Early Learning (DEL) who dedicated their time, energy, and expertise to this effort. Thank you for your commitment to process improvement and innovation!

Over the six Lean events, 124 kaizens moved forward for further evaluation and implementation. Fifty one (41%) have been completed (either implemented or tabled after further evaluation by the workgroup) and 41 continue to be actively worked on by participants of the Value Stream Map (VSM) Workshops. In this newsletter, you will see some examples of the kaizens. I encourage you to visit our webpage at www.workfirst.wa.gov/wflean/default.htm to learn more about this great work. While the Workshop phase of this project is over, there is still much work to be done. Thirty-two, of the 124 kaizens have been transferred from workshop teams to the Community Services Division (CSD) for further implementation processing. These are typically items that require longer lead times or specific technical processing—such as rule filing or IT programming. I want to assure you that I am committed to keeping these kaizens moving forward.

The road travelled was not always smooth. We documented each step of this process, identifying what worked well and what we could improve. In addition to bringing the improvement ideas to conclusion, we will continue to evaluate the impacts of changes we make as a result of this project and seek future process improvements using knowledge that we have gained along the way.

I am excited about the work we are doing and what it will mean for those we serve. We are beginning to see improvements, and some examples of improved performance outcomes are highlighted to the right. More parents will successfully find ways to manage barriers, complete educational programs, enter the workforce, and move along their pathway to self-sufficiency. I truly believe this work will help us transform lives.

WASHINGTON WorkFirst

WorkFirst Lean Making a Difference

Early evaluations are showing improved performance outcomes.

Federal Work Participation Rate

	2013	As of AUG 2014	% Increase
All Family	11.7%	14.6%	2.9%
Two-Parent	10.4%	15.1%	4.7%

Reducing Job Search Churn Outcomes (WF 1)

- Participants referred back from ESD to CSD without successful job search completion has decreased from 51% in 2012 to 39% in the first half of 2014.
- Participants in ESD job search who entered employment has increased from 21.6% to 24.4%.
- Participants who successfully completed Career Scope without being referred back increased from 30% to 37%.

Exciting results! Way to go!

The Final Reflection focuses on WorkFirst Lean events #4, 5, and 6. For details regarding WF Lean events #1, 2, and 3, please see our Mid-Point Reflection on the WorkFirst Lean website:
(<http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/wflean/Mid-Point%20Reflection%20WF%20Lean.pdf>)

WorkFirst #4:

Increasing Successful Outcomes for Contracted Educational Activities

Our fourth event, co-sponsored by Babs Roberts (CSD) and Jim Crabbe (SBCTC), was held in April 2014 in Everett. The mission of this event was to evaluate and improve the current process of enrolling and supporting WorkFirst participants in contracted education and training activities. We want to increase the transitions from basic skills to vocational education and completions of degrees and certificates. Twenty-nine participants, representing DSHS, the SBCTC, and community colleges worked hard to identify 47 possible improvement ideas. The group is now focusing on implementing 26 of their ideas that are categorized into four areas:

- **Improving case manager and college connections** (such as aligning the Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) to the education plan at the time of enrollment)
- **Creating a foundation for success** (such as a peer mentoring program)
- **Increasing student participation** (such as by creating an auto-notification to partners who are assigned to the case when a case staffing is scheduled)
- **Implementing training for college and DSHS staff** (such as consistently applying sanction rules)

One kaizen focuses on the benefits of education. The result is that CSD is creating a new brochure for parents. The brochure will provide information about education and training programs at the colleges. It will focus on programs that train parents for jobs and self-sufficiency, and also promote education after Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to continue to improve a parent's earning potential. We'll post the new brochure on the WorkFirst Lean website when it is ready to go.

Give a Round of Applause to the DSHS Lean Practitioners

The success of the WorkFirst Lean project was made possible through the contributions of many talented DSHS Lean Practitioners who facilitated the six WorkFirst events. A special "thank you" goes out to these practitioners:

Shannon Bragiel, Services & Enterprise Support Administration

Susan K. Brown, Developmental Disabilities Administration

Kristin Byrne, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration

Ann Cao, Economic Services Administration

Mary Ellen Dawson, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration

Lynda Di Giorgio, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration

Don Doud, Economic Services Administration

Dan Gapsch, Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration

Michelle Grimmett, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration

Chris Kerns, Children's Administration

Shawna Miller, Children's Administration

Doug Mora, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration

April Potts, Children's Administration

Heather Rayman, Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration

Frances Wellsbury, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration

We would also like to thank Eka Frimpong and Julie Meyer, from the Employment Security Department, for being joint Lean facilitators in WorkFirst #1. The DSHS facilitators became Lean practitioners through the DSHS Lean Practitioner Certification Development Job Assignment (DJA) program, which began in September 2013 and is currently offered four times annually.

The DSHS Lean Practitioner Certification DJA program is a six-month, hands-on program designed to teach participants Lean thinking and tools. This program provides opportunities for the participants to gain experience and build their skills in Lean process management, continuous improvement, problem solving, facilitation and decision making. Moreover, this program serves as the backbone and primary resource for planning, executing, and implementing Lean projects, such as the WorkFirst project, throughout DSHS. For more information about the DSHS Lean Practitioner Certification DJA program contact your DSHS Lean Administrative Coordinator (<http://one.dshs.wa.lcl/ci/Lean/Pages/Coordinators.aspx>). Thank you DSHS Lean Practitioners!

– Linda Kleingartner, DSHS Director, Office of Continuous Improvement

WorkFirst #5: *Reducing Transition Gaps*

The fifth event was held in Spokane in June 2014. The goal of this workshop was to identify and implement strategies to improve the communication between the WorkFirst participant, the DSHS case manager or Social Service Specialist and/or the partner to determine the appropriate next steps to lead the participant to the right activity. The group identified 53 kaizens and is currently working toward implementing 29 of those improvement ideas. Their ideas fell into five categories:

- **Staff Training** (regarding policies, processes and reports)
- **Policy Changes** (such as allowing partners to print and review the Individual Responsibility Plan with participants)
- **IT Changes** (such as creating a referral code for Commerce activities similar to college and ESD referrals)
- **Addressing Breaks Between Activities** (expanding access to engagement opportunities during break periods)
- **Best Practices** (such as supporting co-location of partners in the Community Services Offices where space and staffing allows)

kaizen spotlight: *Highlights of WF5 include*

One kaizen creates better options for participants with a short break between activities (such as between school terms), that will support continued engagement during the gap period. DSHS is looking at options for additional activities for clients (1-6 week time frames). An analysis is currently underway working with CSOs, that have higher than average participation rates, to identify what available activities are offered.

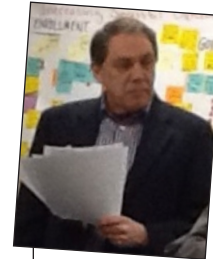
Excerpts of Feedback from Participants

What worked well?

- "Getting together with people from partner agencies – sharing ideas – realizing the things we have in common."
- "Participation from all partners at all levels of their organizations."
- "The Lean process worked well. The process is designed to allow maximum creativity & brainstorming in the process. This generates ideas that might not at first seem a relevant solution."

What could have improved the process?

- "Our kaizen needed IT help and unfortunately with all the changes ours weren't a priority. It will happen but on a later date."
- "Overall timing of the activities during the week. Not enough time for breakout groups to meet. Also, too many kaizens were chosen which took away from focusing on two or three major ones so results could be seen."



"When I attended my first Lean event, I was skeptical that the process could ultimately make any difference, but was encouraged and convinced that it would, by the time I left. Having participated in three of the six LEANs, I found my colleagues to be intelligent, creative, enthusiastic, caring and committed. I am eager to see how the outcomes of our efforts can assist our WorkFirst parents to become successful, resilient and self-sufficient."

- Mat Carlisle, Program Administrator, Workforce Education, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, participant from WF 3, 4, and 5

Kaizen: A Japanese term meaning incremental continuous improvement that increases effectiveness of an activity to produce more value with less waste.

WorkFirst #6: Post Comprehensive Evaluation Engagement (Barrier Removal)

"Value Stream Mapping is such a powerful tool for demonstrating the complexities of our business processes and ferreting out gaps and duplication of effort. Our workgroup came from many disciplines and the collective knowledge and expertise of the group was amazing. It was a very valuable and energizing experience to be part of the WorkFirst #6 Lean Workgroup."

- Myrna Hoyle
CSD, ESA Social Worker Supervisor,
and participant from WF 6

Check out
our Website at:
[www.workfirst.wa.gov/
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WorkFirst 6 was held in Yakima in July 2014. Fifteen participants from CSD, DEL, the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), and People for People were tasked with identifying strategies that increase engagement in appropriate barrier-removal activities and help families move along their pathway towards self-sufficiency.

The group identified 43 kaizens. Seventeen of them, grouped in the following categories, were moved forward for implementation:

- **Providing more training** (such as SSI eligibility training)
- **Reviewing Assessments** (such as revising the assessment form)
- **Engaging Parents In Activities** (such as moving them more quickly into appropriate barrier stabilization activities)
- **Building Housing Partnerships** (such as working more with housing contractors and experts)
- **Building Partnerships** (such as exploring a joint pilot project using a mental health supported employment model)
- **SSI Case Management** (ideas such as intensive case management that keeps participants in an SSI pathway, moving toward SSI approval)

Capitalizing on Momentum

The WorkFirst Lean project demonstrates the many possibilities for transforming lives in meaningful, tangible ways. Using Lean tools allowed the WorkFirst Lean event participants to see the transformation that occurs when subject matter experts are empowered to make changes in their work processes and their agencies. Each WorkFirst Lean event built upon knowledge and expertise identified in prior Lean events. We are capitalizing on that momentum to support Lean in CSD and throughout DSHS.

Culturally, DSHS staff are solution-focused and highly invested in providing critical services to clients. Historically, we haven't asked "if" we should make improvements, but instead, asked "how." Lean helps those who do the work answer the question of "how" by providing a framework and structure for getting everyone in the room to visualize the problem, suggest improvements, and empower staff to implement change.

Because Lean has successfully answered the question of "how," Lean continues to grow and gain momentum via multiple statewide events, trainings, and opportunities. In 2013 and 2014, there were more than 60 A3 Problem-Solving events and more than 70 Value Stream Mapping events. Lean courses such as Lean Orientation, Lean Tools (A3 Problem-Solving and Visual Controls), and Lean Leader are offered statewide. Most administrations support one or more full-time Lean Administrative Coordinators. The DSHS Continuous Improvement Newsletter is published monthly and DSHS Lean Community of Practice meetings also happen monthly. This is just the beginning! Stay tuned for ever-expanding opportunities to implement Lean in your work. Steven Covey wrote, "Your most important work is always ahead of you, never behind you." As Lean continues to gain momentum, consider the possibilities of what is ahead. We have only scratched the surface!